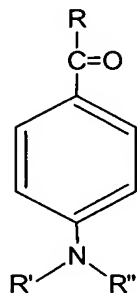


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A functionalized lithium initiator made by a process which comprises reacting a dilithium initiator with an alkylaminoaryl compound of the structural formula:



wherein R, R', and R'' can be the same or different, wherein R is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen atoms, alkyl groups, aryl groups, alkaryl groups, and amino aryl groups, and wherein R' and R'' represent alkyl groups.

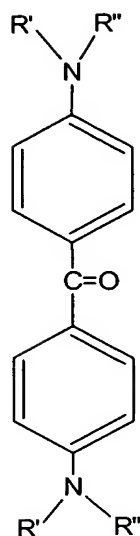
2. A tire tread rubber composition which is comprised of (a) at least one rubbery polymer which is synthesized using the functionalized lithium initiator specified in claim 1 and (b) at least one member selected from the group consisting of carbon black and silica.

3. A tire tread rubber composition as specified in claim 2 wherein said rubbery polymer is coupled with at least one member selected from the group consisting of silicon halides and tin halides.

4. A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 1 wherein the alkylaminoaryl compound is of the structural formula:

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15 wherein R' and R'' can be the same or different and wherein R' and R'' represent alkyl groups.

5. A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

20 6. A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein R represents a hydrogen atom and wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

7. A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 8 carbon atoms.

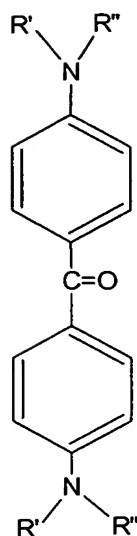
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8. A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 4 carbon atoms.

9. A tire tread rubber composition as specified in claim 2, wherein the
30 alkylaminoaryl compound is of the structural formula:

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wherein R' and R'' can be the same or different and wherein R' and R'' represent alkyl groups.

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10. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 9, wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

11. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 9 wherein R represents a hydrogen atom and wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

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12. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 9 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 8 carbon atoms.

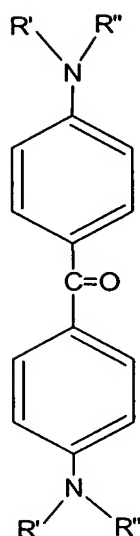
13. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 9 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 4 carbon atoms.

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14. A tire tread rubber composition as specified in claim 3, wherein the alkylaminoaryl compound is of the structural formula:

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wherein R' and R'' can be the same or different and wherein R' and R'' represent alkyl groups.

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15. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 14, wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

16. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 14 wherein R represents a hydrogen atom and wherein R' and R'' represent methyl groups.

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17. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 14 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 8 carbon atoms.

18. A tread rubber composition as specified in claim 14 wherein the alkyl groups contain from 1 to about 4 carbon atoms.

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19. A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 1 wherein the dilithium initiator is reacted with the alkylaminoaryl compound at a temperature which is within the range of about -70°C to about 20°C.

20. A functionalized lithium initiator as specified in claim 4 wherein the

dilithium initiator is reacted with the alkylaminoaryl compound at a temperature which is within the range of about -60°C to about 0°C .